

the Reformation, I believe, there has been scarcely a choral service in a church with only a chancel instead of a choir. Presuming, then, that our service is a congregational service (which is its distinction from all other services), it is quite wrong for the minister to be screened off from the people; he ought, I presume, to be always in the nave (as, indeed, he generally is), except for the Communion Service; and we will suppose the officiating minister to face north or south, except during the reading of the Lessons, when he faces west. Now the people are all the time facing east. This being the case, it seems absurd for a minister placed in the nave to be responded to by a choir in the chancel,—perhaps on the other side of a screen, whilst the people are in the nave.

At Canons Ashby (Northamptonshire), the people face east. The two choirs are behind them, and the organ still west, behind the choirs. This plan is good for the singing of the choir, and the people's hearing and singing; but it is objected to on the ground that the congregation might turn round, as they but too often do, when the choir is in a west gallery. The organs in Jesus College, and St. John's, Cambridge, are placed, I am informed, in small galleries (appropriated to the organ alone) on the north side of the chancel, about eight feet from the floor; the front of each instrument containing the diapasons projects from an arch: the organ in St. John's is an example of the position of an organ about the period of the Reformation, but now unused, the musical service in this, as well as in several other College chapels in Cambridge, having been for a number of years discontinued; that in Jesus College is after the ancient mode, and is found to be effective.

One plan which I would suggest, is to have the two choirs facing one another, near the desk and pulpit (the people facing east), and to have the organ on both sides of the chancel (the conducting tubes and trackers going under the floor), or at the east end of one aisle.

We will now suppose the singers to be in the chancel, and assume that the two choirs are on the two sides of the chancel, as at St. Margaret's, Leicester; then the organ (if the chancel is large enough) may be east of the choir, and divided.

This particular organ at St. Margaret's, Leicester, is, however, clumsily managed, and looks ugly and untidy; but there is, of course, no necessity for that. Besides being divided, a part of the organ on the north side is placed in an additional building, which also serves for the vestry. This plan answers exceedingly well, and if the choir is to be in the chancel, and the chancel is large enough, it is, perhaps, the best plan. If the organ is small, it may be altogether inside the arch opening into the vestry, so as to make, by its front, an ornamental filling up of the arch. In that case, it would be better to have the player at the east side of the organ, and the blower opposite to him.

At Byfield, Northamptonshire, the organ, as in cases named just now, is over the altar, which is, of course, indefensible; but the musical effect might be good if the choir was in the chancel. At Canons, in Hertfordshire, Handel's organ is, or was, in a similar position.

At St. Mark's, Chelsea, there is at present no organ; the choirs face each other in the transepts, and the people face east in the nave. This, it appears to me, is just as it should be. It has been proposed, in case an organ is placed in the church, to put it round the apse, between the colonnade and the exterior wall. I have no doubt it would answer very well in that position. If a chancel has aisles, the east end of one aisle might, I think, often be a very good place for the organ, or against the wall of the aisle, especially if elevated.

An organ builder of great experience, gives it as the result of his observation, that the most favourable position for sound seems to be where the organ can be placed under a roof which has a pitch or inclination of 45 degrees. A low roof, especially when plastered, is generally prejudicial to sound; and a number of angles in a low roof is also most unfavourable to sound. He considers that wood

and stone are each as favourable reflectors of sound as chalk and plaster are unfavourable.

In places where neither the principles of architectural societies have penetrated, nor the desire to return to the former customs and uses of our church, either in the celebration of the service or in the fittings of the edifice, has been felt, the place of the choir, as many of us know to our sorrow, is still in the west gallery; and this arrangement is not only objectionable in a musical point of view, but, so far as my experience goes, it certainly prevents the carrying out of that excellent passage in Holy Writ, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

The most successful example I can adduce of the position of an organ near the choir, and not in a gallery, is in the new church of St. Mary Magdalene, St. Pancras, London, where the organ is placed against the wall, at the east end of the south aisle, on stone corbels about 8 feet high—thus elevating the instrument considerably above the singers, so that both sides of the choirs and congregation hear the organ equally well.

CHRISTIAN ART.—CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN.

If I may claim space for a few lines in reply to Mr. Hendrie's second letter on the above subject, I would beg to state that it is because I so highly appreciate the value of iconology as a record of "the various phases of theological history," and so fully entertain the view that "Christian art is nothing less than theology figured;"—it is on this very account that, as an admirer of Christian art, I have ventured to record my protest against any unadvised or hasty change of titles which have been long identified with particular pictures, or rather types of picture.

An artist produces a painting, and calls it "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception;" posterity, for brevity's sake, call it simply "The Conception," and this goes on for two centuries till some one suddenly discovers that "Conception is a misnomer," and that "Assumption" is the proper term. Now this may be true or it may be not; but is it not manifest that if one generation may change a title, another may take the same liberty? And if one critic is in favour of "Assumption," some future critic may advocate the title of "Beatification" or of "Glorification," for all these are equally applicable to the "Mulier sole amicta," seeing there is no Scriptural authority for any of them. And then where is this to end? And what becomes of the value of iconology as a history of "theological phases?"

No wonder, then, that a proposal of this kind should be received with some hesitation, although emanating from a mind the most profound and deeply versed in the subject-matter to which it belongs. The title of a picture may be the clue to its meaning, and an interpreter of the works of ecclesiastical painters is perhaps the last that can afford to abandon that clue.

Now, whether or not Murillo was himself carried away by the religious enthusiasm of the time,* there can be no doubt that in his vocation as an artist he would regard himself as the exponent of the favourite doctrine of his church and nation, and would accordingly deem it part of his mission, as well as the indispensable condition of success, to portray his Madonnas as free from the "peccatum originale," in the same sense as our blessed Lord himself. The importance of this sentiment in the composition of the picture no one can underestimate. The human element is entirely eliminated. There remains the form only of woman, the whole being is divine. And it is manifest that a painter interpreting this doctrine would approach his subject in a very different spirit from one who might of might

not regard the Virgin only as "Blessed among women," and this too, whether a glorified or expectant state were chosen as the medium of representation.

No one denies that Murillo studied, and in the main adopted, the forms and treatment offered to his contemplation in pictures of the "Assumption" by earlier schools, but he might for all this have aimed at infusing into his pictures a new and more perfect spirit of divinity, corresponding to the doctrine in his time so warmly professed; and to mark this change it is more than probable that he would seek for an appropriate title, and what so appropriate as "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception?" To this title, then, I, for one, intend to cling, both out of deference to the painter, and from an apprehension that if pictures of this type are to be merged under the title of the "Assumption," a valuable landmark in the history of art, and of theology, would be sacrificed.

On one point, of minor importance, I must apologise for not having made myself understood. When I asserted that the term "Conception of the Virgin" was a contraction of the full title "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception," I did not mean that the two terms were logically convertible, but that in popular language the one was frequently substituted for the other in reference to one and the same picture. The very heading of Mr. Hendrie's first letter is a proof of this: he has there stereotyped the term "Conception of the Virgin," as a popular designation of the "Soul of Murillo," whilst works of the highest authority prove that the full title is "Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception." If then, this be not a contraction, call it a transposition, if you will, for that makes no difference. It is a patent fact, that in hundreds of cases these two terms are applied indiscriminately to the same pictures; and it is only cutting the knot, and not solving the difficulty, to tell us, as your other correspondent does, that "if there is any meaning in words, St. Anne, and not the Virgin, must be the person who figures chiefly in a representation of the Conception of the Virgin," or to tell us that Pacheco made an egregious mistake, or wrote under terror of possible torture. Perhaps, however, the solution may be this,—a "Conception of the Virgin" may either represent a fact or a doctrine. If it be designed to represent the fact, then St. Anne must be the principal figure, with details according to the Athos MS. or the "St. Anna of the Gilded Gate." But if it be designed to represent the doctrine, then the Virgin will be the principal figure, with treatment according to the rules laid down by Pacheco.

There is in the Gallery of Bologna a picture (No. 57) with the following descriptive title—"S. Anne adorant la Conception dans la Gloire céleste." It is evident that such a picture could not represent a fact, but a doctrine; and that doctrine it was which Murillo sought to herald in his pictures of the Madonnas, and therefore to call them "Assumptions" would be materially to divert them of their theological meaning.

T. F. S.

Mag. Coll. Oxon.

BRICK AND TILE-MAKING UPON COPYHOLD LANDS.—The question which arose at the Halmote Court, held at Bishopwearmouth, in October last, for the Lord Bishop of Durham's Manor of Houghton-le-Spring, as to the right of the copyhold tenants of this manor to dig clay and make bricks, &c. upon their copyhold lands, has been settled against the tenants having any such rights by the Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill, which is now the law of the land. It stands in substance thus:—After the last day of July next, the lords of manors can compel their tenants to enfranchise their surface rights, fines, heriots, &c. in their copyholds, and the tenants have the same power against the lords. All the minerals, including coal, stone, clay, gravel, &c. which are all distinctly specified in the Bill, are reserved as belonging exclusively to the lords, and cannot be worked without their license or authority.—*Durham Advertiser.*

* I was well aware that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin had been promulgated as a doctrinal doctrine long before the 17th century; but it was the movement in Spain during that century, and the edicts which that movement elicited from several successive Popes, from the bull "Regni sacrosancti" of Paul V. in 1614, to that of Alexander VII. "Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum," in 1661, that first enabled the clergy to promulgate it in dogmatic form.